

FORT MONROE, ~~OLD~~ M.A.P.S. STATION
(Harbor Entrance Control Station,
Building No. 209)
Hampton
Hampton County
Virginia

HABS NO. VA-595-C

HABS
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

(HARBOR ENTRANCE CONTROL STATION) Old M.A.R.S. Station (Building #209)

HABBS No. VA-595-C

RECORD NAME

Location: Bastion #4
Fort Monroe
Hampton, Virginia

Present Owner: United States Army

Present Use: Storage

Significance: At Fort Monroe, an army post dominated by early twentieth-century Colonial revival architecture, Building #209 is the only example of the International Style. It is also the only building built on top of the actual 1820s fort wall and one of the few architect-designed buildings at the Fort.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1943. Architectural drawings from the firm responsible for Building #209 are dated 1943.
2. Architect: Beddow, Gerber, and Wharples. Little is known about this Virginia firm.
3. Original plan: Building #209 is an irregularly shaped hexagon with three, one-room floors and roof deck. The first floor has a partition wall separating the lowest observation room from the only bathroom facilities in the building.

B. Historical Context:

Construction in 1943 and designed by the architectural firm of Beddow, Gerber, and Wharples in the International Style, Building #209 remains essentially unaltered from its 1940s appearance. It was originally used as a M.A.R.S. (Military Affiliated Radio Station) signal station and Harbor Entrance Control Station. For these reasons it was built on the barbette in the fourth bastion of the early-nineteenth century fort commanding a wide view of the Chesapeake Bay. It became a meeting place for the Boy Scouts in the 1960s. When the Scout Troop moved to Building #2 (an old powder magazine), Building #209 was offered to the Fort Monroe Yacht Club for offices. The Yacht Club declined the offer as Building #209 is a considerable distance from the marina. The building is now used for communication equipment storage.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Essentially unaltered since its 1943 construction, Building #209 is the only example of International Style architecture at Fort Monroe. Its design, purpose, and site are unlike any other structure at the post.
2. Condition of fabric: The old M.A.R.S. station has been well maintained since its construction.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 34' (diagonal at widest point); 1521 square feet. Building #209 is an irregularly shaped hexagon with three stories and roof deck.
2. Foundation: Poured concrete foundation.
3. Walls: Poured concrete load-bearing walls.
4. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: Metal exterior circular stair accessing all floors (not roof deck). Concrete walkway surrounds third floor. Metal railing surrounds third-floor walkway and roof deck. Roof deck accessed by fixed exterior ladder from third-floor walkway.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Doors on first and second floors (northwest side of Building #209) are metal. Door on third floor is metal and on the southwest side of building.
 - b. Windows: Six of the nine windows on the first floor three-light double transom; the remaining three are three-light single transom windows. Ribbon windows continue at eye-level around five sides of the second and third floors.
6. Roof: The roof is flat and covered with tarpaper.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans: All floors are hexagonal with one open space except the first floor which has a concrete block wall separating the observation space from the bathroom facilities.
2. Flooring: The floors are poured concrete.

3. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls and ceilings are poured concrete.

D. Site:

Although entry is on the west side of the building, this monitoring facility faces east overlooking the Chesapeake Bay and Hampton Roads Harbor. The building is perched on the barbette of the fourth bastion of the fort walls. A ramp proceeds from Bernard Road up the barbette to Building #209.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original architectural drawings: The original drawings for Building #29 are kept in Engineering Planning Services (EPS), Master Plans and Maps Files, Fort Monroe, Hampton, Virginia.

B. Bibliography

Arthur, Robert, and Richard Weinert. Defender of the Chesapeake: The Story of Fort Monroe. Annapolis: Leeward Publications, Inc., 1978.

Casemate Museum Library and Archives, Building File. Fort Monroe, Hampton, Virginia.

Directorate of Facilities Engineering (DFE), Property Book. Fort Monroe, Hampton, Virginia.

Engineering Planning Services (EPS), Master Plans and Maps. Fort Monroe, Hampton, Virginia.

Integrated Facilities System (IFS), Real Property File. Fort Monroe, Hampton, Virginia.

Sprock, Phyllis. Department of the Army: Inventory of Historic Property. April 1980.

ADDENDUM TO:

FORT MONROE, OLD M.A.R.S. STATION

(Fort Monroe, Entrance Control Station)

(Fort Monroe, Bldg. No. 209)

Hampton

Hampton County

Virginia

HABS No. VA-595-C

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